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LETTERS

FROM THE

HON. ABBOTT LAWRENCE

TO THE

HON. WILLIAM C. RIVES,

OF VIRGINIA.



BOSTON:

1846.

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LETTERS.

RESOURCES OF VIRGINIA.

WE invite the attention of our readers to the interesting communication of this distinguished citizen, in our columns of to-day. It is a subject which comes home to the "business and bosoms" of us all—the interests and improvement of our own State. Mr. Lawrence, during his service in Congress, was most advantageously known to the whole Union, by the clear-sighted sagacity and strong practical sense which always distinguished his views of public measures. He is eminently *national* in his sentiments and feelings, and has ever shown himself a true friend of the South. Suggestions from so liberal and enlightened a source, naturally commend themselves to the cordial and respectful attention of Virginians. We shall have great pleasure in laying before our readers the additional communication he gives us reason to expect.

Richmond Whig.

MR. LAWRENCE TO MR. RIVES.

NUMBER I.

BOSTON, JANUARY 7, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR :

When you were with us last summer, I more than half promised to make you a short visit in February, and I have not yet given up entirely the long anticipated pleasure of doing so.

I have not forgotten our conversation on the condition of our country generally, and more particularly the strong desire manifested by you, to improve the condition of the people of your own State. I have always entertained feelings of high regard for the "Ancient Dominion," arising probably from the intimate revolutionary associations between her and our "Old Bay State," as well as from my having looked upon her as the mother of many of the greatest statesmen, and purest patriots, which our country has produced.

I am not surprised that you of Virginia should desire to do something by which the matchless natural resources of your native State may be developed. I have thought that the State of Virginia, with its temperate climate, variety and

excellence of soil, exhaustless water power, and exuberant mineral wealth, contains within herself more that is valuable for the uses of mankind, in these modern days, than any other State in our Union.

I need not say to you, that these gifts of Providence are of little consequence to your people, or to our common country, unless developed and improved, for the purposes for which they were intended. When the Constitution of the United States was adopted, Virginia contained double the population of New York; and now, New York contains double the number of people in Virginia. I do not propose to inquire into the causes that have produced such a mighty change in the relative numerical condition of these two States. I do propose, however, to state to you some of the reasons why you should *now* set about doing something, to bring back that prosperity, which many of your people believe is forever lost.

The truth is, that Nature has been profuse in her gifts, in behalf of your people, and you have done but little for yourselves. The settlement and development of the resources of the Western country, have brought into existence an active, and effectual competition with your people, in the great staples of your agricultural products, namely, Wheat, Indian Corn and Tobacco. Maryland and North Carolina, like yourselves, are essentially affected by competition from the same quarter; from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. The great West is now supplying largely the New England, and other States, which are consumers of these agricultural staples, in quantity and value, to a greater extent than all the foreign world besides. The internal improvements of the country already finished, have brought Boston, by steam, within the distance of four days' travel of Cincinnati, by way of Buffalo; and a contemplated rail-road from Burlington, Vermont, to Ogdensburg, New York, will bring us practically yet nearer to those fertile regions of the West. The expense of transportation is essentially reduced wherever Rail-roads or Canals have been constructed, and even the Mississippi herself bears down upon her bosom the products of the West, at less than half the freight that was charged a few years ago.

Thirty years since, a few small schooners were sufficient to carry on the commerce between this city and New Orleans; now, within the last year, we have had one hundred and sixty-five arrivals from New Orleans at this port, and many of the vessels are of the largest class; ships from five hundred to seven hundred tons burden. They have brought us Tobacco, *Indian Corn*, Flour, Cotton, Beef, Pork, Lard, Lead, &c., amounting in the aggregate to many millions of dollars. Of the first three of these articles, which now come to us in such quantities from New Orleans, our importations, in former times, were almost exclusively from Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland. Can you expect to compete successfully with the Western regions of our country, where, without much labor, the soil produces double, and sometimes even more, to the acre, than the average crops of the last mentioned States? This competition will increase; and it appears to me that the remedy for its inauspicious effects upon your welfare, is to create a *market at home* for your surplus agricultural products; by establishing such Manufactures as may be adapted to the peculiar condition of your labor. There are two classes of labor; intelligent, and unintelligent; the former is that kind of labor which requires a considerable amount of mental culture, with active physical power. This combination is capable of applying Science to Art, and of producing results that are difficult, and oftentimes complicated. The latter description of labor, is of that character which depends principally on physical strength; this quality of labor you have in abundance; and I hope you are not without a tolerable supply of the higher class. You may, without doubt, commence the manufacture of almost every description of articles, requiring but little skill, and prosecute the work with success. Manufactures of such articles as Iron, Hemp, Wool, Cotton, Leather, &c., wrought into the coarser and more common articles, would succeed with you.

You will find, very soon after a regular system of the division of labor shall have been introduced, that a desire for knowledge will be created; more education, more intellectual cultivation, will be desired by those engaged in the mechanical departments; and with this eagerness for knowledge, will

follow skill and cleverness in the use of tools, and then will follow the inventive power, for which our people have become so distinguished in the estimation of the world.

You cannot do any thing in Virginia, that will so completely promote the introduction of Rail-roads, as the placing of manufacturing establishments on your beautiful waterfalls. The water power on the James River, at Richmond, is unrivaled; and it seems a great waste of natural wealth, to permit it to run into the sea, having hardly touched a water-wheel. If the prominent men of Virginia, of both political parties, will give up their party warfare, and resolve themselves into a "Committee of the Whole, on the Commonwealth, to improve the state of Agriculture," by making two blades of grass grow, where there is now but one; if they will establish manufactures, and carry on a well-adjusted system of internal improvements, they will then have done something that will be substantial, abiding—which will stand as memorials of their patriotic devotion to the interests of the people, through all time. Let your common school system go hand in hand with the employment of your people; you may be quite certain that the adoption of these systems at once, will aid each other.

You cannot, I should suppose, expect to develop your resources, without a general system of popular education; it is the lever to all permanent improvement. It appears to me essential to the preservation of our Republican Institutions, that the people of this country should be educated, and that all intellectual culture should be founded upon our Holy Religion: the pure precepts of the Gospel are the only safe source from which we can freely draw our morality. It is essential that we should have an educated population; inasmuch, as every man can exercise the right of suffrage:—the elective franchise, in the hands of an ignorant and debased population, would very soon place our country in a state of anarchy. We should strive to elevate the laboring and less favored classes. In Europe, the great body of the people have nothing to do with the election of their rulers; even in England, free as she is, compared with many of the continental States, the mass of the people do not exercise the elective franchise: this is a point of primary importance, and

your people may rest assured that taxes for education, even as a matter of pecuniary gain, would greatly enhance the value of their property. I am, therefore, clear in my convictions not only of the duty, but the expediency of introducing manufactures extensively into your State, with an expansive system of popular education; and from these movements will soon be seen the happiest results, in a healthful prosperity, and a striking improvement in the condition of the people.

Just for a moment imagine the whole supernumerary population of Virginia employed at a rate of wages, such as are paid in the Northern and Eastern States; what think you would be the effect? I have not a doubt that the value of land would increase within five miles around each manufacturing village, equal to the cost of all the machinery in it. The sphere of labor must be enlarged, diversified, if you would bring out the energies of your people. I yet hope to see Virginia take that place, among the old *Thirteen*, that seemed by Providence to be assigned to her: it can only be achieved, by energy and perseverance, on the part of those who have the destinies of their fellow citizens in keeping. Let the law makers, and those who administer them, not only speak out, but so act, as to give an impetus to labor: let it be considered respectable for every man to have a vocation, and to follow it. If not for his own pecuniary profit, let him labor for character, which he is certain to obtain, if his labors benefit others. I intended to make some remarks on the recommendation of the President in his annual message, and the report of the Honorable Secretary of the Treasury, to change our whole Revenue system. The plan proposed, if carried out, has an important bearing on the subject of this letter, which is, however, already sufficiently long. Reserving therefore my remarks upon the last mentioned topics, for another communication,

I remain very faithfully,

Your friend and ob't servant,

ABBOTT LAWRENCE.

To the Honorable W. C. RIVES,
Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Virginia.

MR. LAWRENCE TO MR. RIVES.

NUMBER II.

Another Letter from the Hon. Abbott Lawrence.—We cheerfully give up our own space to-day, to a second Letter from the Hon. Abbott Lawrence, and feel sure that our readers will thank us for the substitution. We have taken but a mere glance at this document, but think we may safely say, it is a powerful and impressive paper—throwing much light upon subjects of particular interest to Virginia, and, indeed, to the whole country.

Richmond Whig.

BOSTON, JANUARY 16TH, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR :

I stated in my letter of the 7th, that I should write to you again, upon the subject of the entire change proposed by the President of the United States, and the Secretary of the Treasury, in our Revenue Laws. It is no other, than the adoption of ad valorem for specific duties, and a reduction of the whole to 20 per cent ; this being the maximum at which the Secretary supposes the largest revenue can be obtained. I shall not now discuss the rates of duty that will produce the greatest amount of revenue. I will leave the Secretary to settle that question ; but shall endeavor to show what the effect will be upon the country, if his recommendation should be adopted by Congress. I deem the scheme proposed to Congress, in the main, a *currency* question, and one which, if carried out, will reach, in its operation, the occupation and business of every man in the United States. I believe the most economical member of Congress will agree that thirty millions of dollars will be required, annually, to carry on this Government, for the next five years, and that this estimate does not include large sums that may be wanted to settle our affairs with Mexico, Texas, &c., &c., and that this sum is to be raised from Foreign Importations and the Public Lands. The goods, subject to duty, imported the last year, amounted, in round numbers, to 90 millions of dollars, and the goods free of duty to about 25 millions. I have not the returns at hand, and may not be exactly correct as to amounts, but they are near enough to illustrate my arguments : the former paid an average duty of about 32 per cent, creating a revenue, say of 28 millions. If the revenue derived from an importation of 90 millions,

gave 28 millions of dollars, what amount must be imported, to produce the same sum at 20 per cent ad valorem?

The answer is, 140 millions; add to this, the free goods, about 25 millions, and we have an importation of 165 millions of dollars. Our exports have not exceeded, nor are they likely at present to exceed 120 millions: we then have a deficit of 45 millions to provide for; and how is this balance to be paid? State Stocks are no longer current in Europe. Even the Stocks of the United States cannot be negotiated on favorable terms.

We who are merchants can answer this question, having often been obliged to make our remittances in coin, when our imports have exceeded our exports.

If we are obliged to import 140 millions of goods subject to duty, to meet the wants of the Government, it is quite certain that the coin must be exported, to meet the deficiency. If the importations fall short of 140 millions, we then have an empty Treasury. In one case, the country will be made bankrupt to fill the Treasury; and in the other, the Treasury will be bankrupt, and resort to Congress for Treasury Notes and Loans. It may be said that our exports will increase with our imports; this supposition I think fallacious. The policy of Great Britain, and that of all Europe, has been, and is likely to continue, to protect every thing produced either at home or in their colonies. In Great Britain, the article of Cotton is now admitted free, the duty having been repealed the very last year. This was owing to repeated representations of the Manchester spinners to Parliament as to the necessity of such a measure, in consequence of the competition from foreign countries in the coarse fabrics manufactured from cotton produced in, and shipped from, the United States. The argument presented in the House of Commons was, that the Americans had taken possession of every market, where they were admitted on the same terms with their coarse goods. This is a true representation, and I apprehend the repeal of the duty on Cotton will not enable the British manufacturer to again obtain possession of those markets, for the heavy descriptions of Cotton fabrics.

What other article of importance does the Government of

Great Britain admit free of duty? I know of none. Cotton is admitted free of duty from necessity. How is it with Tobacco? A duty is paid of 1200 per cent. Wheat is prohibited by the "Sliding Scale," and in case of a total repeal of the Corn Laws, very little Wheat would be shipped from this country, inasmuch as it can be laid down, in ordinary years of harvest, much cheaper from the Baltic. Beef and Pork are burdened with a heavy duty. The duty and charges on a barrel of American Pork laid down in Liverpool, with the commissions for sales, amount to \$5,75; so that the quantity of this article shipped to England must be inconsiderable, unless the prices here should be so low as to be ruinous to the farmer. I cannot find in the catalogue of our strictly agricultural products, a single article that is not burdened with a high duty, in England, or other parts of Europe, if it comes in competition with their own products; nor can I discover that there is a disposition on the part of a single European Nation to relax the stringent system of duties on imports from this country. It is possible that Great Britain may abate her Corn Laws, so far as to admit Indian Corn at a nominal duty. If it should be done, I have little faith in our being able to ship it to advantage. I state the fact, then, that exports will not increase in consequence of a reduction, or even a total repeal, of the present Tariff. The duty in Great Britain, on all the products of the United States, received in that kingdom, including cotton, is not less than 48 per cent., and exclusive of cotton, 300 per cent; and this, too, on raw produce generally, where the charge of freight constitutes from one-tenth to one-quarter of the cost here—and this is *Free Trade!*

I hope you, of Virginia, will examine this matter, and ask yourselves where the best customers are to be found for your agricultural products. I will just state to you here, that Massachusetts takes annually more Flour, Indian Corn, Pork, and many other articles, the productions of the West, as well as of Virginia, than all Europe.

The question then arises, what will be our condition after the proposed plan of low duties goes into operation? In twenty days after the bill becomes a law, it will have reached every country in Europe with which we have trade: the man-

ufactories are all set in motion for the supply of the American market; the merchandize is shipped on account of foreigners, in many cases with double invoices, one set for the Custom House, and another for the *sales*, so that instead of the duty amounting to 20 per cent, it will not, probably, exceed 15 per cent. This has been the experience of the American Importers in New York, who, previously to the passage of the Tariff of 1842, had (most of them) abandoned the business, not being able to compete successfully with fraudulent foreigners. I will not say that all foreigners commit frauds on the revenue—far from it;—but I do say, that enormous frauds have been perpetrated by foreigners, on the revenue, under ad valorem duties, and will be again—prostrating the business of honest foreign and American importers. In less than twelve months, after the new plan shall have been in operation, this whole country will be literally surfeited with foreign merchandize; (if it be not so, the revenue will fall short of the wants of the Government;) we shall then owe a debt abroad of millions of dollars, which must be paid in coin. The exchanges go up to a point that makes it profitable to ship specie; money becomes scarce in the Atlantic cities; yet bills on England and France do not fall; the loans made to the South and West are called in; demands for debts due from those sections of country, are made; exchange cannot be obtained,—produce is purchased and shipped; and when it arrives at the North, it will not command the cost in the West: a paralysis will have struck the business of the country; produce will no longer answer to pay debts due at the North, and the next resort is to coin, which is to be collected and sent down the Mississippi, or over the mountains, to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Western and Southern credits are cut off, as the people of those sections can no longer promptly meet their engagements. The new States, and the outer circle of the Republic, are the weak points; and the first giving way of the Banks is heard from those places, where there is the least amount of capital. We see the storm approaching like a thunder shower in a summer's day; we watch its progress, but cannot escape its fall. It at last reaches the great marts of trade and the exchanges, having swept every thing in its

course; and the Banks of the Atlantic cities, after a violent effort to maintain their credit and honor, are forced to yield to this Utopian experiment on the currency. I have no hesitation in stating that all this will take place within the space of eighteen months from the time this experimental bill goes into operation; and not a specie-paying Bank, doing business, will be found in the United States. Where will be the revenue which was to produce such a mighty sum under low duties? Where is the Treasury, and the Secretary? and the President and his Cabinet? The Treasury is empty; the Secretary is making his estimates of income for 1849, and preparing to ask Congress for a large *batch* of Treasury Notes; or perhaps the deficit is so large that a loan may be required. We have now come to a point of depression in the great business of the country, which has attracted the attention and anxiety of all classes of people, *all* having felt its blight, excepting the great capitalists and money holders, who are reaping golden harvests by the purchase of property, which the wants of the unfortunate throw into the market at ruinous rates. It is now seen and felt from the low wages of labor, and the great number of persons unemployed, with the cries of distress from all quarters, that it is the labor and not the capital of the country that suffers by violent revulsions caused by unwise legislation. Have the people of the South and West forgotten their troubles of 1837 to 1842—to the hour of the passage of that Law, which has redeemed the credit of the Government, and restored prosperity to the country? I have intimated that there is less capital in the new States than in many of the old ones; it will not be denied that the monied capital of this country is held in the Northern and Eastern States, and that the South and West are usually largely indebted to them. Now, I should be glad to be informed what benefit is to be derived by a Planter in Alabama or Mississippi, or a farmer in Ohio or Illinois, by a change, like that I have described, particularly, if by chance he should be in debt? Do the people of the South believe they can raise the price of Cotton, or be able to negotiate loans, to prosecute the construction of their contemplated Rail-road? Do Ohio, Louisiana, Illinois, Michigan, believe they are to create a better market for their produce, or sooner complete

the Harbors, so much desired on the shores of those "Inland Seas," and be able to negotiate Loans, and obtain subscribers to the Stock of their intended Rail-roads, by the adoption of this new system of political economy? And now what say the *great States* of New York and Pennsylvania to this proposed experiment? Can they afford to try it, and are they ready? If they are, it will be adopted; if they are not, the present Law will stand, and the Country will repose for awhile in happiness and prosperity. Any one would suppose, that those States, that are now just emerging from embarrassment, which at one time seemed almost sufficient to overwhelm them in ruin, would be unwilling to try an experiment which is certain, in my judgment, to place them in a position that will be the means of destroying the fair prospects of thousands who are resting in quiet security upon the faith of what they deem a paternal and wise Government. The question of an important alteration in our Revenue Laws, should not be kept in suspense. The Treasury will feel its effects before the end of the present year. The expectation of a great reduction of duties prevents the merchants from going on with their usual business. Voyages are delayed, and orders for goods are held back, until this important question shall be settled. I say, therefore, if we are to go through this fiery ordeal, let it come at once,—we cannot probably place ourselves in a better condition than we are now, to meet the troubles that await us.

Mr. Walker proposes to substitute *ad valorem* for specific duties, in opposition to our own experience, and that of almost every other country. I have never yet found an American merchant who has not been in favor of specific duties, wherever it can be done with convenience to the Importer and the Government. I confess it is a bold measure to propose a total and entire change of a Revenue system, which was established with the Government, and has stood the test of experience, through all the trials of political parties and Administrations, from General Washington to Mr. Polk. It appears more extraordinary at this time, as the country is in a high state of prosperity. The revenue is enough for all the reasonable wants of the Government, and the people appear to be satisfied with their condition. The resources of the country were

never developing more rapidly ; the increase of our population, the present year, will probably equal that of the last, which I estimate at 600,000 souls ; our wealth too has been wonderfully augmented by the construction of Rail-roads ; there has been a great increase of our shipping, engaged in the domestic commerce of the country, not only by sea, but upon our rivers and great lakes : the manufacturing interest has been largely extended ; and the soil, too, has been made to produce vastly more than at any former period. The whole productive power of the country has been greater in three years (that is, since the passage of the Tariff of 1842,) than during any equal space of time in our national history. There have been three periods of universal distress throughout our land, since the peace of 1783, and in each case under low duties. I appeal to those who remember those periods ; and to others, I refer to the annals of our country. Those periods were from 1783 (the conclusion of the Revolutionary War) to 1789, 1815 to 1824, 1837 to 1842.

I would respectfully recommend to the Secretary of the Treasury, who appears to have received new light upon the subject of our national economy, to examine the history of the legislation of Congress at the above periods. He will find in his own department of the Government, abundant evidence of the distress that existed under low duties and a deranged currency.

There is a prevalent idea abroad, that the capital of the country will suffer exceedingly by a revulsion in its business, and that the tariff of 1842, has operated in favor of the capital, and not the labor of the country. There can be no doubt that capital is generally profitably and safely employed, and well paid. The profits of capital are low, when wages are low ; but capital has usually had the power to take care of itself, and does not require the aid of Congress to place it in any other position, than to put the labor in motion. Congress should legislate for the labor, and the capital will take care of itself. I will give you an example of the rate of wages under low duties, and under the tariff of 1842. In 1841 and 1842, the depression in all kinds of business became so oppressive, that many of the manufacturing establishments in New Eng-

land were closed, the operatives dismissed, the mechanical trades were still, and every resource for the laboring man seemed dried up.

In the city of Lowell, where there are more than thirty large cotton mills, with from six to sixteen thousand spindles each, it was gravely considered by the proprietors whether the mills should be stopped. It was concluded to reduce the wages; this was done several times, until the reduction brought down the wages from about \$2 00 to \$1 50 per week, exclusive of board; this operation took place upon between 7 and 8000 females; the mills run on; no sales were made of the goods; the South and West had neither money nor credit, and finally, it was determined to hold out till Congress should act upon the tariff. The bill passed, and of course the mills were kept running, which would not have been the case, if the act had been rejected; and now the average wages paid at Lowell—taking the same number of females for the same service—is \$2 00 per week, exclusive of board. Yet Mr. Walker says labor has fallen. Where are the wages for labor, I ask, lower than they were in 1842? Who is to be benefited by the adoption of a system that gives up every thing, and gives no reasonable promise of any thing?

I have succeeded, I trust, in showing that there is no probability of our exports increasing, in consequence of a reduction of the tariff, and that the products of the Western States find the best market among the manufacturers at home. In regard to the Southern and cotton growing States, they are to be greatly benefited by the increase of consumption of their staples at home. No appreciable quantity can be shipped to England, if the tariff should be repealed, it being already free of duty. The establishment and successful prosecution of the spinning of cotton in this country, has enabled the planters to obtain for several years past at least, an additional cent per pound on the whole crop, and perhaps even more. The Americans are the greatest spinners of cotton in the world, the British excepted. This competition has kept the price from falling to a ruinous point on several occasions, and it has been acknowledged by many of the most intelligent planters in the South. Our consumption reached, the last year, one hundred

and seventy-six millions of pounds, which is equal to the whole crop of the Union in 1825, and equal to the whole consumption of Great Britain in 1826. This is a striking fact, and one that should be remembered by the planters. The history of the production and manufacture of cotton is so extraordinary, that I propose to send to you some statistics on the subject, furnished me by a friend. I hope you will not deem me over sanguine, when I tell you that it is my belief that the consumption of cotton in this country will double in 8 or 9 years, and that it will reach 400 millions of pounds in 1856; and further, that we are not only destined to be the greatest cotton growers, but the most extensive cotton spinners, in the world. We have all the elements among ourselves to make us so. The manufacture of cotton is probably in its infancy; but a moderate portion of mankind have yet been clothed with this healthful and cheap article. Nothing can stop the progress of this manufacture, but some suicidal legislation, that will prostrate the currency of the country, and deprive the people of the means of consuming. There can be no legislation that will break down the manufacture of cotton and wool, excepting through the operations of the currency. We may be disturbed by low duties; the finer descriptions of cotton and woollens, printed goods, and worsted fabrics, would be seriously affected by low ad valorem duties, but the coarser fabrics, such as are generally consumed by the great body of the people, will be made here under any and all circumstances. If we have competition from abroad, the labor must, and will come down; this has been often tested, and our experience establishes the fact.

In Virginia and other Southern States, and even at the West, many persons have believed that the protective system was made by, and for New England, and that New England, and particularly Massachusetts, could not thrive without it. Now, this is an error; the South and West began the system of high protective duties, for the purpose of creating a market for their produce, (although the principle of discrimination was recognized and established when the first tariff was enacted.) It is not true, that we are more dependent on a protective tariff, than the Middle, Western, or Southern States. Those States

that possess the smallest amount of capital, are the most benefited by a protective tariff. We have in New England, a great productive power ; in Massachusetts far greater than any other State, in proportion to population. We have a hardy, industrious, and highly intelligent population, with a perseverance that seldom tires, and we have also acquired a considerable amount of skill, which is increasing every day ; besides this, we have already accomplished a magnificent system of intercommunication between all parts of this section of the country by rail-roads ; this is the best kind of protective power, having reduced the rate of carriage to a wonderful extent ; this being done, we have money enough remaining, to keep all our labor employed, and prosecute our foreign and domestic commerce, without being in debt beyond the limits of our own State. Now I ask, how *we* shall stand, compared with Pennsylvania, Ohio, Alabama, Georgia, or Louisiana, when the day of financial trial shall come. I do not deny we shall suffer, but as it has been in times past, we shall go into and come out of the troubles far stronger than any other State out of New England. It is not my purpose to present to you the balance sheet of Massachusetts, but it is due to her character, and her dignity, that she should stand before you in her true position. I have never advocated a protective tariff for my own or the New England States exclusively, nor have those gentlemen with whom I have been associated in this cause, at any time, entertained a narrow or sectional view of the question. We have believed it to be for the interest of the whole country, that its labor should be protected, and so far as I have had to do with the adjustment of those difficult combinations embraced in a tariff bill, I have endeavored to take care that the interests of all the States were protected, whether they were large or small. I say now to you, and it should be said in Congress, and to the country, that Massachusetts asks no exclusive legislation. If Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, the three great States, with Kentucky, Georgia, Missouri, Alabama and Louisiana, wish to try an experiment on iron, coal, hemp, cotton bagging, sugar, &c., &c., I am ready, as one citizen of Massachusetts, to meet it, and await in patient submission the result, which I doubt not will be found, within eighteen months, in the reali-

zation of all I have predicted. I say again, I would not, if I could, have a tariff made for Massachusetts alone. If, however, there should be a new one, let *our* interests, with those of every other in the Union, share that protection to which we are all entitled, and of which *we* claim our *full* share. I can with confidence assure you, that we shall go upward and onward. *We will work*. If 12 hours' labor in the 24 will not sustain us, we can, and will work 14; and at the same time feel that Congress cannot take the sinews from our arms, or rob us of the intelligence acquired from our public schools, established by the foresight and wisdom of our fathers.

At the risk of writing a long letter, I cannot forbear alluding to the fact, that the habitual agitation of this question of the tariff, has worked, in the main, to the advantage of New England.

We were, previous to the war of 1812, an agricultural and navigating people. The American system was forced upon us, and was adopted for the purpose of creating a home market for the products of the soil of the South and West; we resisted the adoption of a system, which, we honestly believed, would greatly injure our navigation, and drive us from our accustomed employments, into a business we did not understand. We came into it, however, reluctantly, and soon learned that, with the transfer of our capital, we acquired skill and knowledge in the use of it—and that, so far from our foreign commerce being diminished, it was increased, and that our domestic tonnage and commerce were very soon more than quadrupled. The illustrations were so striking in every department of labor, that those who, fifteen years ago, were the strongest opponents of the protective tariff among us, have given up their theories, and acknowledged that the revelations are such as to satisfy the most skeptical. We have gone forward steadily, till many descriptions of manufactures are as well settled in New England as the raising of potatoes. Our experience has given us skill—and, of course, we have confidence in our own resources, that does not exist elsewhere.

When I converse with gentlemen from the South and West, respecting the establishment of manufactures—they reply that

they should long ago have engaged in them, but the repeal of the tariff, the action of the government, prevented them. Now you cannot blame us, if this constant agitation of the tariff question has tended to give New England not a monopoly, but advantages which she has not been instrumental in bringing about. I have no doubt we have been gainers, on the whole, by these agitations, yet we have at times been great sufferers. I wish those States that have withheld their energies from entering upon these industrial pursuits, to examine this matter—and, if I am right, to *take an observation and a new departure*. We have no jealousy, whatever, concerning the establishment of manufactories in all parts of the country; on the contrary, I believe those gentlemen from the South and West, who have been here, will bear witness to the desire on the part of the people who are engaged in manufactures, to impart all the information in their power; there is room for us all. When the southern and western States shall manufacture their own clothing, we shall have become extensive exporters of the variety of manufactures produced here. We have the ships, and the men to navigate them. We shall pursue an extensive foreign commerce with manufactures, and bring home the produce of other countries, such as coffee, tea, &c., &c., and pay for the produce of the South and West, with foreign luxuries, and necessities of life. It has often been said here by us, who advocate protection to American labor, that in wearing British cottons, woollens, &c., &c., we were consuming British wheat, beef, pork, &c. I am happy to find authority of the highest respectability for this opinion, in the person of one of the most eminent merchants, as well as one of the best and most honorable men in England, Mr. William Brown, of Liverpool—lately the free trade candidate for Parliament, from the county of Lancaster. In a letter to John Rolfe, Esq., a landholder, upon the advantages of free trade, he says: “You next allude to the League wishing to injure you. I presume it will not be denied, that all interests in the Kingdom are so linked together, that none of them can suffer without the others being injured. We must sink or swim together! Paradoxical as it may appear, I think Great Britain is the largest *grain exporting* country in the world,

although it is impossible to estimate accurately what quantity of grain, &c., is consumed in preparing £50,000,000 value of exports, by which you are so greatly benefited. It is placed in the laboratory of that wonderful intellectual machine, man, which gives him the physical power, aided by steam, of converting it into broadcloth, calico, hardware, &c., &c., and in these shapes, your wheats find their way to every country in the world."

I thank Mr. Brown for the clear statement he has presented, of the importance of a home market, and commend this extract from his letter, to the consideration of every farmer in the United States; it is perfectly sound, and applies with particular force to our present condition. To place the people in a condition of permanent and solid prosperity, we must encourage home industry, by obtaining the greatest amount of production; this can only be obtained by diversifying labor, which will bring with it high wages; and unless the labor is well paid, our country cannot prosper. Agriculture, the foundation of all wealth, depends on production, and a market for those products. The encouragement of agriculture, is found in the establishment of manufactures, which if maintained, will be certain to secure a market.

I ask the farmer to look for a moment at the following statement: American flour in Cuba pays a duty of about \$10 per barrel; in Rio Janeiro \$5 to \$6, and in many other ports the duties vary from 50 to 150 per cent; in return, we take coffee, most of which we pay for in coin, *free of duty*—and this is free trade. We have, too, treaties of reciprocity with foreign countries; and among others, Great Britain, (not including her colonies,) by which her ships are admitted into our ports on the same terms as our own; they come freighted with her minerals and manufactures, which are sold here, and take in return a variety of articles, the produce of the United States; such as timber, lumber, fish, &c., touch at New Brunswick or some other colony, and go home free of duty. We have, too, triangular voyages, made from England to Jamaica, and other British islands, with cargoes, and thence to the southern States, where they load with cotton, tobacco, and other produce, for England; this, too, is called free trade.

I will not pursue this branch of the subject, but give you a fact. Not long since, the foreign carrying trade was nearly all in our own hands; now the reciprocity system, not including the colonies of foreign nations, gives to foreigners more than one third of all the carrying trade of the United States!! I cannot believe the time is far distant, when the government of the United States will protest, as it ought, the foreign navigating interest of this great country. If we would have American seamen to man our navy, the mercantile marine must be protected in the carrying of our own productions. One more fact, and I will close these long, and I fear you will think, desultory remarks. Some years since, a few bales of American coarse cottons were sent from this country to Hindostan, as a commercial experiment; the superiority of the fabric, and the material of which it was made, gradually brought the goods into notice and use in that country, and the annual exportation from the United States increased from a few bales up to 3 and 4000 per annum. The British manufacturers were much annoyed at this interference, and it is presumed that it was through their influence that the East India Company (the government of that country) have repeatedly augmented the discriminating duty on these goods, (which are called drillings,) for the purpose of protecting their own manufactures against those of the United States; prior to 1836, the duty was five per cent in favor of British goods; in that year it was increased to $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; a few years after, augmented to $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and even this rate of differential duty proved insufficient to keep out the Americans, who drove a profitable trade notwithstanding the great difference against them.

And now, within a few months, the East India Company have been compelled again to increase the discriminating duty to 15 per cent, in order to exclude our goods altogether; and this difference will, without doubt, accomplish the object. These facts are deserving of a passing remark, as illustrative of the energies and resources of the United States. As late as the declaration of the last war in 1812, this country imported almost all its coarse cotton fabrics from Hindostan, whence they came literally by ship loads, and were paid for almost

altogether in coin. No country seemed to be more abundant in means necessary to supply such goods cheaply, than Hindostan; its soil furnished an abundance of cotton, which, though not of equal quality to that of the United States, was much less in price, and labor was cheaper than in any country in the world. Cotton spinning machinery was available through the medium of British capital, and the manufactures received a protection of $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent against foreign interference. No country seemed more secure from foreign competition in these goods, than Hindostan, and least of all, was there fear of competition from the United States; a country 15,000 miles distant, where a day's labor will earn about 25 pounds of good rice, whilst in Hindostan it obtains less than 10 pounds of very inferior rice. But the American planter furnished better raw cotton; the manufacturer, a better and cheaper fabric; the ship owner, a speedy and cheaper conveyance. Their united efforts drove the British manufacturer of these coarse goods from the largest British Colonial market,—a market which the Americans would now be in possession of, but for the interposition of the East India Company, with another protective duty to sustain their manufactories. I have no fault to find with the course pursued by the British, in these regulations. I have introduced these facts, to exhibit to you the transcendant folly of attempting a system of low duties and free trade, where it is all on one side. I have not yet known the British government to reduce the duties to a point that has reached a single important interest. Their free trade and low duties never apply to any article that seriously competes with their own labor, nor are they likely to adopt such measures. The free trade of the political economists of Great Britain, is a transcendental philosophy, which is not likely to be adopted by any government on the face of the globe, unless it be the Chinese, and we have already the *earnest* of the effect of low duties on the internal condition of that country. The trade of that empire is fast approaching to barter; the precious metals having been drained, to pay for the foreign products introduced into it.

I am aware that I have written a long letter, but I could not well abridge it, consistently, with glancing at many topics

in which I take a deep interest. The subject is boundless, and I would cheerfully carry out by illustrations, and examples, many of the points, upon which I have touched, but I forbear for the present. When I have the pleasure to meet you, we can discuss all these questions, embracing not only the present condition, but the future prospects and destiny of our beloved country, for which I entertain the strongest attachment. Our strength and glory is in upholding and maintaining the Union.

I shall send, in a few days, statistics furnished me by a friend, who is intelligent, careful and accurate in these matters, and who holds himself responsible for all that will be stated.

I pray you, my dear sir, to accept the assurances with which I remain, most faithfully, your friend, and obedient servant,

ABBOTT LAWRENCE.

To the Hon. WILLIAM C. RIVES,
Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Virginia.

MR. LAWRENCE TO MR. RIVES.

NUMBER III.

BOSTON, FEB. 23, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR :

When I wrote to you on the 16th of last month, I proposed to present in another letter some facts in regard to the progress of the spinning of cotton, since the first high protective tariff in 1816, to the cotton year, ending 31st of August, 1845.

These facts I shall offer for the special consideration of those who inhabit the cotton growing region of our country ; and of those who brought forward and carried that law through Congress.

The tariff law of 1816 was founded in wisdom, and I am ready here to make my acknowledgments to those distinguished statesmen of the cotton growing States, who successfully consummated an act that has done so much to promote the prosperity of the whole Union.

The primary object on the part of those members of Congress representing the cotton planting States, in establishing a high protective tariff, was to extend the consumption of their great staple in this country, by excluding foreign made cotton fabrics, and substituting a domestic article, manufactured of American cotton. I think the authors of the tariff law of 1816 may congratulate themselves and their countrymen, on the complete success that has followed from the adoption of the minimum of twenty-five cents the square yard, contained in that bill. Under its beneficial operation we have been enabled to supply our own population with cottons of the coarse and middling qualities, and to export to foreign countries to the amount of four or five millions of dollars annually,—for which we receive in payment, tea, coffee, sugar, hides, copper, &c. These goods, the product of our own labor, have become a substitute for coin, in the several countries to which they are shipped.

It would seem that the founders of this system of high pro-

tection to labor ought to be satisfied with its results, as the quantity of cotton now spun in the United States is far greater than the most sanguine of its friends anticipated in 1816. According to a statement made up by Mr. P. T. Jackson and Mr. John A. Lowell, for the use of the tariff convention held in New York, in 1832, the home consumption of cotton prior to the passage of the act of 1816, was eleven millions of pounds, being about three eighths of the quantity now spun at Lowell.

The quantity spun in Great Britain in 1816, was eighty-eight millions of pounds. There are no data to be relied upon for continuous returns of home consumption, between 1816 and 1825-1826.

In 1826-'27, the returns were made in a New York price current, and they have since been continued, and are deemed to be as correct as the nature of the case will admit.

In 1826-'27, the amount spun in the United States was 103,483 bales, which we may estimate at 330 lbs. each, [net of tare] equal to 34,149,390 lbs.

In the same year, the quantity spun in Great Britain was 197,200,000 pounds. From 1828 to 1830 was a period of embarrassment and distress *among manufacturers*, consequently the consumption of 1829-'30 was only 126,512 bales, of about 345 pounds each, amounting to 43,646,640 pounds; while the consumption in Great Britain was 247,600,000 pounds. At this period some of our southern friends, who had been foremost in advocating home manufactures, and had counted largely on the benefits anticipated by them in 1816, from the operation of the protective policy, (as greatly augmenting the consumption of their staple,) began to manifest dissatisfaction, with what they considered the slow progress of our cotton manufactures. The idea entertained, and put forth, was, that we should never require so much, as to bear any considerable proportion to the consumption of Great Britain. This, as will be shown, was a false view of the case, and has proved a capital error.

In 1832-'33, the quantity spun at home reached 194,412 bales, averaging perhaps 360 pounds each; in 1835-'36, 236,733 bales; in 1837-'38, 246,063 bales; in 1839-'40, 295,193

bales; in 1841-'42, there was deep commercial and manufacturing distress, and the consumption receded to 267,850 bales. In the latter part of the year 1842, and in 1843, after the present tariff law went into operation, a revival of business throughout the country took place, and brought up the amount spun to 325,129 bales.

In 1844-'45, (year ending 31st of August last,) the amount spun was 339,006 bales. There is a quantity of cotton consumed in the interior of the States, which, never having reached the seaports, is not included in the New York statement, that has been estimated to be at least 41,000 bales; we shall therefore estimate the total quantity at 430,000 bales, of 410 pounds each, net, making a total of 176,300,000 pounds as the consumption last year, against 11,000,000 pounds in 1816—being a period of 29 years.

The consumption in Great Britain has gone on steadily increasing, but not in so rapid a ratio as in the United States. The returns for 1845 have been received,* and amount to 560,000,000 pounds against 176,300,000 pounds in the United States. Thus the increase in the United States from 1816 to 1845, has extended from 11,000,000 to 176,300,000 pounds in 29 years, being an augmentation of *sixteenfold*. The increase in Great Britain in the same period of time has been from 88,700,000 pounds, to 560,000,000 pounds; being an augmentation of less than sevenfold, against an increase in the United States of *sixteenfold*.

These are not only striking, but important facts, and present a view of the case, which refutes the anticipations of those who entertained different opinions of the future increase

* Quantity of Yarns spun in Great Britain in 1845:

494,000,000 pounds.

Exported in Yarns,	134,500,000 lbs, valued at	
12d, 24cts,		\$ 32,280,000
Exported in manufactures,	202,360,000 lbs, valued at	
18½d, 36½cts,		73,000,000
Consumed at home,	158,000,000 lbs, valued at	
40cts,		63,200,000
	<hr/> 494,860,000	
Whole value of cotton manufactured in England,		<hr/> \$ 168,380,000

of the spinning of cotton in this country, fifteen years ago. I cannot but hope that the views and opinions of some of the prominent men of the South may undergo a change, when they examine this question dispassionately; and that they will come to the conclusion that they are deeply interested in the spinning, as well as in the producing of cotton, at home. As regards the future, if the general peace of the world be maintained, and the leading business concerns of the country are not disturbed by the legislative action of the federal government, there is no reason why the increased home demand for cotton, should not go on in as rapid a ratio as during the past. This would be doubling the present consumption in a little more than eight years.

There are now an immense number of spindles under construction in a majority of the States, (probably not less than 500,000;) all of which are intended to be in operation before the first of January, 1850, and the probability is, that at that time, the quantity of cotton spun, will reach 650,000 bales, of 410 pounds each, or 266,500,000 pounds. There will, also, be a great increase in Great Britain, but not in the same proportion; as we possess some advantages in the manufacture of heavy goods, which are not enjoyed in England. So long as we produce better goods, and can maintain our superiority abroad, there will be a constantly increasing export demand; which is of great value to the whole country. Upon a review of this branch of industry, it appears to me that its future prospects are excellent, if not disturbed by bad banking, and (what is still more pernicious to all branches of business,) unstable and unwise legislation.

The tariff has already been altered several times, (I believe six or seven) since 1816.

If the present movement against the act of 1842 shall succeed, in accordance with Mr. Walker's plan, it must be followed soon by a counter movement; if not on the part of the people, the government itself will recommend it, for revenue.

It may be truly asserted that the coarse cotton fabrics, such as are worn by the laboring classes, are sold as cheap here as in England, or in any part of the world. Of course there is

no further burden imposed on the consumers of this description of home made goods. It has been said that the existing duties on cotton goods prevent importations of almost every kind. This is so far from the fact, that for the last three years, the amount of cotton, and mixed cotton and worsted fabrics, printed and plain, imported, have been larger than in former years, having ranged from \$10,000,000 to \$13,000,000. This large amount is of the finer descriptions, and such as are worn by the fashionable and rich. We shall continue to import largely of these luxuries, so long as our people have surplus means to expend in dress; and the permanent revenue, under the present system, will be much greater than under that proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

The question has often been asked, why not reduce the duties on cottons, if you can sell them so low? I answer that the duty now is nearly inoperative, entirely so on some kinds, such, for example, as are exported in large quantities. If the duties were reduced materially on the coarse goods, I should interpose no objection, provided ample protection was maintained on the middling and fine qualities. This is a matter to be carefully arranged by practical men. We have now certainly nothing to fear in the manufacture of yarns, as high as No. 14—so far, we can go on without protection, but the higher numbers require protection, and it should be a specific duty. The law, as it now stands, although inoperative on coarse cloth, gives confidence to the investment of capital in machinery, for the manufacture of finer fabrics,—in fact a very large amount is already invested in mills, which produce yarns and cloth as high as No. 60. Without protection, and that in form of specific duties, there will be no increase of machinery adapted to the middling and fine fabrics. The great amount of printed calicoes require protection, and will suffer severely without it. I will not dwell longer on this subject of cotton. I trust I have presented facts to satisfy the cotton planter, that his interests have been promoted by creating another market, and a larger one, too, for the spinning of his staple. We actually consume [wear] more pounds of cotton in this country, than is consumed in Great Britain—since more than two-thirds of

the quantity spun in that country is exported in the form of yarns and cloth. We work up more than France, and quite as much as 60,000,000 Germans. Our consuming ability of this, and all other comforts of life, is beyond that of an equal number of persons of any other country, and five times as great as that of Russia.

The factories of only Massachusetts and a neighboring State, spin annually 180,000 bales of cotton.

We received one million of barrels of flour (more than the whole export of the United States to foreign countries) the last year. The amount of products of States out of New England, taken by Massachusetts the last year, amounted to \$40,000,000, in cotton, lead, wool, sugar, coal, iron, flour, grain of all sorts, pork, beef, lard, tobacco, rice, &c., &c.; for which we paid in the products of our labor; and this is a steady and increasing market for the articles I have named.

In fact, Massachusetts (not to speak of the other New England States, which are all large consumers) affords greater support to the Agricultural and planting States, South and West, than any other State in the Union, and greater support to the strictly Agricultural States, than all foreign countries. The tariff of 1842 was enacted as much for the benefit of the Southern and Western States, as for Massachusetts, and they have derived as much advantage from it in proportion to their capital. Of the truth of this declaration, they will be satisfied, after a year's experience under Mr. Walker's plan of low ad valorem duties.

The notion is prevalent, I am fully aware, that the Northern and Eastern States, engaged in manufacturing, enjoy the principal benefits from the present tariff. But this is not the case. By reference to the following quantities of protected articles, produced out of New England, almost wholly, you will see that there are other great protected interests in the country, besides the manufacture of cotton and wool. The duties on these are from 40 to 100 per cent, and on spirits to a greater extent. There are produced from

450 to 500,000 tons of iron.

220,000,000 pounds of sugar.

20,000,000 pounds maple sugar.

9 to 12,000,000 gallons of molasses.

5 to 7,000,000 tons of coal.

50 to 60,000,000 pounds of wool.

10,000,000 bushels salt.

60 to 70,000,000 gallons of spirits, mostly from grain.

12 to 15,000,000 yards of cotton bagging.

20,000,000 pounds bale rope and twine.

80 to 90,000 tons of hemp and flax.

To this list might be added twenty minor articles, worth in the aggregate, more than the whole amount of cotton fabrics produced in the United States.

Iron, we still import to the amount of 70 to 80,000 tons, including nearly all used on rail-roads, which can and will be produced at home, as soon as increased capital is acquired. We now produce more iron than France or Russia, or any other country, save Great Britain, whose product is now 1,500,000 tons.

Within a few years there can be no doubt that the product of iron will be doubled, provided the prosperity of the country is not interfered with by experiments made by Congress on the labor and currency of the country, which is a greater discouragement to branches of business requiring a large fixed capital, than is imagined by many of our legislators who make and unmake tariffs.

It is estimated that at the present prices of sugar, the cultivation, in a very brief period of time, will be extended to the required home consumption, now about 300,000,000 pounds, which in ten years may be 500,000,000 pounds. I have no doubt that the best interests of the nation require that the present duty on sugar should be maintained with other protective duties. This extension of sugar cultivation will employ a large amount of labor, now devoted to the production of cotton.

It would seem that several States of this Union, might with profit multiply the occupations of labor. It appears to me, they require new sources of support, and the progress and condition of their population, with the amount of production, present to the reflecting portion of the people a strong argument, in favor of such new sources ; I will state a few facts.

The State of Virginia contains 64,000 square miles; had in 1840, 1,239,797 inhabitants; being less than 19 to the square mile; gross products, according to Professor Tucker, \$76,769,053.

New York contains 46,000 square miles; had in 1840, 2,498,617 inhabitants; products in the same year, \$193,806,433; add the product of navigation, as distinct from commerce, which is omitted, on 650,000 tons shipping, \$20,000,000; making in the aggregate, \$213,000,000.

In 1790, by the first census, Virginia had 12 persons to the square mile, and New York $7\frac{1}{2}$; now, Virginia contains 19, and New York 53 to the square mile.

In 1820, Virginia had a population of 1,065,379; in 1830, 1,211,405; in 1840, 1,239,797. New York in 1820, 1,372,812; in 1830, 1,918,608; in 1840, 2,428,921.

In 1850, New York will probably contain nearly 3,000,000, and Virginia say 1,260,000. These facts, one would suppose, would be sufficient to induce the people of Virginia to introduce new branches of industry, and to establish the modern internal improvements for transportation, that the rich resources of the State may be developed. The condition of the two Carolinas is much the same as Virginia. The population of North and South Carolina, in 1830, was 1,319,172; in 1840, 1,347,817— increase $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent in ten years, (principally in North Carolina.)

Even in Great Britain, the increase in the same time was 11 per cent. In Massachusetts, although there were $81\frac{1}{2}$ to the square mile in 1830, against 17 in the Carolinas, there was an increase of 21 per cent from 1830 to 1840. The aggregate products of the two Carolinas in 1840 was \$59,595,734, with a population of 1,347,817. The products of Massachusetts, with a population of less than 800,000 people, amounted at the same time to \$100,000,000, and now the products of labor and capital are more than \$120,000,000.

I have introduced these statements for the purpose of exhibiting fairly the true condition of some of the old States, and to awaken the public mind in those States to the importance of bringing out their productive labor, by introducing new

branches of business, in order that the industrial classes may be profitably employed, and to show that the three States named, have as great a stake in protecting the labor of the country, as any other in the Union. They have now but little else than soil and physical power remaining. You possess but a small amount of productive power, in the form of rail-roads and labor-saving machines. You have a deep interest in common with all the States, in upholding the labor of the country. You seem to be satisfied that the time has come when something should be done to improve the condition of your people. The people of Virginia, with South and North Carolina, (particularly the two former States) have pursued a policy that has brought them, so far as population is concerned, to a stationary condition: and from present indications, I should not be surprised to see Eastern Virginia and South Carolina with a less number of people in 1850, than they contained in 1840.

If you propose now to enter upon those pursuits that are certain in their operations to give employment, and that of a profitable kind to your people, and to create a market at home for your agricultural products, what object can there be in transferring our workshops to Great Britain? The South and West have every motive to give efficient protection to the labor of the whole Union; first, because those employed in the mechanical and manufacturing arts, are the best customers for your agricultural products; and, secondly, because you desire to engage in those departments of labor yourselves. I say then, look well to this project, now under consideration at Washington, to change our whole revenue system. There is one principle upon which every government, and every commercial community, with which I am acquainted, agree throughout the world; and that is, to establish specific duties, or a *valuation of their own*. Mr. Walker has reversed this decision, and recommends *ad valorem* duties on an *alleged* valuation *abroad*. I deem this feature in the bill, a violation of sound principle, and such as must be condemned by men of all parties, whose experience and knowledge are of value. It is no other, in practice, than to drive from our foreign trade a

large number of honest importing merchants, and to place their business in the hands of unscrupulous foreigners. Time may reveal the truth of this prediction.

The President, and his Secretary of the Treasury, have stated that the operations of the present tariff law, oppressed the poor. I confess this assertion surprised me, coming from high functionaries of the government, who have the means of obtaining correct information. I assume the responsibility of stating that a laboring man may be, and is, clothed with American manufactures, from the crown of his head, to the sole of his foot, as cheaply as a laboring man in Great Britain, or any other part of Europe, who wears as comfortable garments; and that the revenue is raised principally from articles consumed by those classes of society, who are in easy pecuniary circumstances. I beg to refer Mr. Walker to the reports from the customs, and ask the favor of him to present them to the President, and he will there find the only article on which the poor man is taxed to any extent, is sugar—and that cannot be deemed very onerous, when he obtains his tea and coffee free of duty, and with a favorable prospect, if the present duty be maintained, of very soon being supplied from our own soil, with sugar, at a price much below that now paid. It is an error of the President and Secretary, to put forth a statement that the tariff of 1842 oppresses the poor man, when the principal part of the revenue is derived rather from the luxuries, than the necessities of life.

When we hear from high sources, of transferring our workshops to Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, I should be glad to know if it be proposed to transfer our intelligent working men with them—and whether a farmer in Ohio can be made to believe that these men will eat more of his beef and pork, in Old than in New England. This is a strange doctrine, and sounds to me quite anti-American, and is the same as the sentiments uttered by the old Tories, previous to the Revolutionary War.

There is one other point to which I shall allude, in the report of the Hon. Secretary. He says that the wages of labor are lower now, than previous to the tariff of 1842. If he means

the wages of labor in the manufacturing portions of the country, I will state a fact, which I think completely illustrates the incorrectness of his assertion.

In the State of Massachusetts, the institutions for Savings, are obliged by law, to make returns to the Legislature. In the annual returns, just published, I find the following :

SAVINGS BANKS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

	Number of depositors.	Amount deposited.	Increase in depositors.	Increase in amount deposited.
1841	39,832	\$6,485,424 82		
1842	41,102	6,675,878 05	1,270	\$190,453 23
1845	54,256	9,214,954 07	13,154	2,539,076 02

Being an increase from 1841 to 1842, of about 3 per cent on depositors, and about $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent on amount deposited—and an increase, from 1842 to 1845, of about 32 per cent on depositors, or nearly 11 per cent per annum, and about 38 per cent on amount deposited, or nearly 13 per cent per annum.

I shall make no comments upon this extraordinary exhibition of the increase of depositors and deposits, further than to state that all the world know for whom these admirable institutions were established, and by whom they are used.

I will not trouble you with more facts, arguments or illustrations touching this great question, national in its character, and as broad as the limits of the Union, and one that reaches the condition of every individual in it.

I have, personally, no more interest in this question than any other citizen. If the government adopts a course of measures that prostrates the labor of the country, I shall, in common with every other citizen, feel its effects. We are, I hold, one great family, and indissolubly linked together, and the chain cannot be touched, without the vibration being felt at either extremity.

I entertain and cherish a strong American feeling; although born and bred in Massachusetts, I have a feeling of pride in the honor and character of every State in our Union. I desire to see our whole population go onward and upward, in a course of prosperity and happiness. My affections for

this country are not bounded by geographical lines, and whether I find myself in Maine or in Georgia, still I am an American citizen, protected by the constitution and laws of one of the most prosperous and happy countries upon which the sun ever shone. With all our party strifes and bickerings, the country goes on prospering, and I trust, to prosper. I have only to ask of those who are now the actors on our great political stage, not to experiment upon the prosperity and destinies of a happy and contented people.

With sentiments of the highest respect and regard, I remain dear sir,

Your friend and obedient servant,

ABBOTT LAWRENCE.

To Hon. WILLIAM C. RIVES, Castle Hill,
Albemarle County, Virginia.



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